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NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

ARTHUR PALMER HUDSON

Editor

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THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE COUNCIL

Chapel Hill

NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

Every reader is invited to submit items or manuscripts for publication, preferably of the length of those in this issue. Subscriptions, other business communications, and contributions should be sent to

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The North Carolina Folklore Society was organized in 1912, to encourage the collection, study, and publication of North Carolina Folklore. It is affiliated with the American Folklore Society.

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The Folklore Council was organized in September, 1935, to promote the cooperation and coordination of all those interested in folklore, and to encourage the collection and preservation, the study and interpretation, and the active perpetuation and dissemination of all phases of folklore. It sponsors the annual Carolina Folk Festival at Chapel Hill, usually in the month of June.

THE DECEMBER 1956 MEETING

The program of the forty-fifth annual meeting of the Folklore Society, in The Virginia Dare Ballroom of The Sir Walter Hotel, on Friday afternoon, December 7, 2:30, promises to be even more varied and interesting than usual. Besides the quality of authoritativeness, it will have real amusement value.

Two numbers will illustrate the folk arts. Mr. Herbert Shellans, a graduate student in anthropology and folklore and an experienced entertainer with folksongs accompanied by his guitar, will sing a number of British and American folksongs. Sra. Rose Lily Soller, a physical-education teacher in the Dagupan City High School, Panginiman, a suburb of Manila, Philippine Islands, who is studying dramatic art and English on a Rockefeller Foundation scholarship, will present Filipino native dances and songs in Tagalog and Spanish. She will be assisted in one number, a beautiful candle dance, by Dr. Eduardo Ortiz, a member of the Lincoln Hospital (Durham) staff, and she will appear in native costume.

Mr. Donald MacDonald, a member of the staff of the Charlotte News, will talk about Scottish Jacobite songs and will sing a number of the most attractive examples. Like most Scots, including Sir Walter Scott, who kept a portrait of Claverhouse ("Bonny Dundee") over his writing-desk at Abbotsford, Mr. MacDonald has a nostalgic sentiment for the Pretender, Bonnie Prince Charlie, and other Scots who resented the forced abdication of James IIafter the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the accession of the Hanoverians. It will be remembered that Flora MacDonald, who came to North Carolina about the time of the American Revolution, was a Jacobite. Whatever the merits or demerits of the Stuarts, they and their cause inspired some of the finest Scots songs, and Mr. MacDonald, who will appear in the Clan MacDonald tartan and Celtic jacket, with Balmoral bonnet and crest and Bonnie Prince Charlie shoes with silver buckles, knows his Jacobite songs.

Another aspect of North Carolina folk culture and history will be discussed by Dr. Norman Eliason, whose recent book, Tarheel Speech, now being enthusiastically hailed by the reviewers, will provide plenty of lively topics. Dr. Eliason talks in the same lively style in which he writes.

Your Secretary-Treasurer, who, according to custom of long standing, has planned the program, sincerely hopes that there will be a good turnout of the membership of the Folklore Society to hear this rich and spicy program. Every member is cordially invited not only to attend in person but to bring along friends, and to be prepared to hear the entire program, which will begin at 2:30 and should end in plenty of time for everybody to get comfortably home.

We need to do more recruiting. The Secretary-Treasurer has made the most of his limited opportunities to add to the membership. This Fall he sent out about fifty special invitations to eligible people not members, inviting them to join the Society. The response has been gratifying, and he welcomes the new members. What he does, other members of the Society can do, many of them even better. We ought to have a membership of at least 400. Recently the Secretary-Treasurer (and Editor of North Carolina Folklore) received a letter from his opposite number in the Green Mountain Folklore Society (with its headquarters in Burlington, Vermont), in which the writer stated: "Our society is now about eight years old. We started with 10 members and now

(continued on page 4)

SOME DURHAM WORMS

By Bertram Colgrave

[Mr. Colgrave was Visiting Professor of English at the University of North Carolina during the Spring Semester of 1956, teaching courses in Old English and the backgrounds of early English literature, and delivering a series of public lectures on early English civilization, to large and appreciative Chapel Hill audiences. He also lectured in several other universities of the East and the South.

[The recipient of degrees from Birmingham, Cambridge, and Durham Universities in England; Lecturer and later Reader at Durham University, and External Examiner for Cambridge University; Fellow in the Society of Antiquaries and of the Royal Historical Society-- Mr. Colgrave is one of the most distinguished English medievalists. His extensive list of publications contains several authoritative works on English saints' lives and legends. He is Chief Editor of the series Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile. Withal, he is a delightful raconteur and lecturer, companion and conversationalist. Coming to the States evidently with their minds predisposed favorably to America and Americans, he and Mrs. Colgrave enjoyed themselves and gave pleasure to hundreds of people in North Carolina and neighboring states, and left with the lively affection of all.

["Some Durham Worms" was written specially for North Carolina Folklore ("worms" being the old word for dragon), and embodies Mr. Colgrave's recollection of traditional stories still current in Durham, England. It is a pleasant published counterpart to a delightful lecture on English saints' miracles which Mr. Colgrave permitted the Editor to record before the Colgraves sailed for England.]

In the county of Durham, situated in the North of England, a number of ancient stories still survive, several of which are concerned with "worms" or dragons. There are very few parts of the world in which the memory of these dragons does not survive. It may be that to some extent they are folk memories of bygone days when occasional prehistoric monsters were still to be found, at any rate in the form of monstrous skeletons. But, be that as it may, these monsters still play their part in the folklore of many a shire. Of these, two from County Durham are amongst the best known.

Only a few days ago, the new Bishop of Durham was enthroned and installed in the cathedral here. Until the beginning of the last century the Bishop of Durham was not only a great spiritual dignitary but also a great landlord, owning much land in the diocese by right of his position. Now, it happened that the Lords of a place called Sockburn in the south of the diocese held their land under the bishop, and every time when the newly appointed prelate was making his first journey to the great cathedral at Durham, he was met in the middle of the River Tees, which divided his diocese from that of York, by the Lord of Sockburn, who belonged to the ancient family of Conyers. He presented the bishop with an ancient sword or falchion, saying these words: "My Lord Bishop, I here present you with the falchion wherewith the champion Conyers slew the worm, dragon, or fiery flying serpent which destroyed man, woman, and child: in memory of which the king then reigning gave him the manor of Sockburn to hold by this tenure, that upon the first entrance of every bishop into the county this falchion should be presented." The bishop then took

the falchion into his hand, and returning it immediately, wished the Lord of Sockburn health and a long enjoyment of the manor.

The falchion is still to be seen in the old Monks' Dormitory at Durham Cathedral, where it is preserved among other relics of Durham's past history.

But perhaps the most famous of all Durham's worms is the Lambton Worm. The story goes that in the 14th century the young heir of Lambton (the family who now bear the title of Earls of Durham) led a careless profane life and even ventured to fish in the river Wear (on which Durham stands) on the Sabbath Day. He would make matters still worse by cursing loudly when the fish did not bite. One day when he had been more profane over his ill-success than usual, he felt something tugging at his line. By the violence of the tugs he was sure that he had caught a great fish. So judge of his disgust when he pulled out a loathsome-looking worm, which he promptly threw into a neighbouring well. (A well, known as the Worm Well, was until recent years still pointed out to visitors. It has now disappeared.)

The worm remained unheeded for a time in the well, till it grew so big that it outgrew its dwelling place. It then made its way by day to the river, where it lay coiled round a rock in midstream. By night it crawled to a neighbouring hill. Eventually it grew so big that it could encircle the hill three times. Worm Hill is still the name of a local eminence, and sure enough there are depressions circling the hill which the natives assert to be the traces of the worm but which are in reality ancient earthworks. It is of course possible that this worm story may have arisen as an explanation of these earthworks.

The monster now became the terror of the whole countryside. It sucked the cows' milk, worried the cattle, devoured the lands, and laid waste the whole district. Meanwhile, the cause of all the trouble, the Lambton heir, had repented of his evil life and gone abroad to the Holy Land, to fight against the Saracens. His father, who was left behind, still lived in the old castle; but things got so bad that he and his servants were practically living in a state of siege. The only way in which they could get any respite was to take the milk of nine cows, pour it into a trough, and leave it for the dragon. He would drink the milk and then without doing any further harm, would go back and curl himself round his favourite hill.

But the worm did not have it all his own way. Many a gallant knight lost his life in attempting to slay it, for it had the marvellous power of re-uniting itself after having been cut in pieces. So the monster remained master of the situation for seven long years, until at last the Lambton heir returned from the wars. As soon as he learnt of the terrible state of affairs he went to consult the local wise woman as to what he should do. She at first reviled him for his wickedness in bringing all the evil on his country; but when she found he was truly repentant, she gave him instructions as to how he might cope with the monster. She bade him take his best suit of armour, stud it thickly with sharpened spearheads and, thus armed, stand in the middle of the river near the monster's day-time haunt. But she warned him that, before going out to fight, he must take a vow to slay the first living thing that met him on his way home if he returned as victor. If he failed to fulfil this vow, then no Lord of Lambton would die in his bed for nine generations.

So the heir went boldly to the river and took up his position on the rock, unsheathing his trusty sword. In due course the worm came to the attack and

received a shrewd blow on the head from the knight's sword. At once it flung its tail round the knight and attempted to crush him in its coils. But the closer the monster pressed, the more it cut itself on the sharp spearheads. Its strength was at last so diminished that the knight was able to cut it in two. The severed half was immediately borne away by the swift current, and the worm, unable to re-unite itself, was speedily destroyed.

Meanwhile, old Lord Lambton was awaiting anxiously the issue of the fight in the castle. When the victory was won his son blew a blast on his bugle and the father, thinking of nothing but his son's safety, rushed out to greet him as he returned. It was impossible for the son to slay his own father, and so, though the monster was destroyed, the curse lay upon the house of Lambton, and for nine generations no Lord of Lambton died in his bed. Whether this series of events actually happened is hard to prove, for the date of the story is vague, but it is well known that several of the Lambtons died in battle, and when in 1761, Henry Lambton, member of Parliament, died in his carriage crossing the new Lambton Bridge which led into the Castle, the local people declared that the curse had worked itself out. One or two ballads have been written about the story, all of them modern; but the most popular one, which was written some time last century, is in the local dialect and is still sung wherever people from North East England gather together. I hope that I may be able to send you a copy of it for publication in this journal at some future time.

(continued from page 1)
have something over 500 in good standing." Surely, Vermonters are not more numerous, patriotic, and prosperous than Tarheels. Our goal ought not to be 400, but much above that number. There was a time when the membership roster of the North Carolina Folklore Society tallied with the Social and Political and Educational Register of North Carolina. Though we have worthy representatives of all these groups, we don't have enough.

We have a live Society and a journal which has attracted national attention and is being subscribed to by the chief libraries of the country. Let's support both by building a broader base of membership. It's easy for old members to get new members -- largely a matter of mentioning the Society to friends, inviting them to attend a meeting, and showing them a copy of North Carolina Folklore.

A TARHEEL AT A MISSISSIPPI HOUSE PARTY

By T. P. Windley

[For being able to publish the following letter, the Editor is indebted to four persons: The Reverend James P. Dees, Rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Statesville; Dr. John B. Bonner, of Aurora; and Mr. and Mrs. W. L. (Binks) Guilford, of Aurora. It was the Reverend Mr. Dees who first directed attention to the existence of the letter, Dr. Bonner who asked Mr. Guilford to find it and let the Editor see it, and Mrs. Guilford who helped find it. Mr. Guilford gives the following account of it (quoted in part).

["I believe it was written about 1850-60 to my grandfather (Dr. William Vines Bonner), who during the Civil War was personal physician to General Robert E. Lee. I am not sure where the wedding mentioned in the letter took place, but the Windleys and the Bonners were living in the general area of present-day Bath, North Carolina."

[It seems clear from the letter itself that the wedding was not in Bath, but near Jackson, Mississippi, where and when the writer says he was clerk in a store. There is nothing extraordinary in that fact, for many North Carolinians in the early half of the nineteenth century were attracted by the reputed rich lands and the boom days in Mississippi to seek their fortunes there. One of them, Shocco Jones, cut a wide swath in the deep South during the 1830's. For details, see my Humor of the Old Deep South (New York: Macmillan, 1936).

[Besides the perennially attractive topic of a wedding and a house party that must have been a house party indeed, the letter touches upon a number of other matters interesting to the folklorist: "'Lasses Dragging," "old Joe Sweeney," "Saddle Bag house," "little pigee and Picayune Butler," "Kunkle's Minstrels," the mysterious expression "to have [or not have] the piles," and the Wellerism in the postscript.]

Jackson Miss Feby 26

Dear Bill

Having Nothing to do to night, I thought I would pen these few lines for your perusal; not that I think they will particularly interest you but merely to while away the time, there being no person in the Store except Myself Henry left for New York three weeks ago and Robert (the other clerk) has gone to a Lasses Dragging which by the by is getting to be quite fashionable here they cannot start anything else here every boddy has joined the church or nearly so there are not more than half a Doz. young ladies in Jackson that does not belong to the church it is preaching preaching all the time I am completely tired of it Myself the Methodist have worn out their bell & had to get a new one they ring it So Much? there has not been a dancing party in town in a Coons age no amusement at all except now & then a Negro Show comes along old Joe Sweeney was here a few weeks ago & Staid one week & Kunkles Minstrels have been performing every night this week except tonight they left for Vicksburg this Morning they I think are a little of the best negro performers I ever Saw. I dont Know what we (that is those of us who are not in the Church) shall do? I Suppose though we must join it out and take the chances for Something new to turn up.

I had Some fun about a month ago I went to a wedding in the county about

8 miles from town & you better believe I Kissed some pretty Girls rich too Some of them have the piles the worst Sort they got me to singing Comic Songs & I sung every thing I knew from Little Pigee to Picayune Butler we Sat up fiddled danced & played until four oclock & then went to bed. The House was one of the Saddle Bag houses as they are called that is two log Houses built about twelve feet apart & covered over making a passage & a long up staire & shed to the back the whole lengh of the House the old folks Slept in the shed & all the young ones up Stairs the Ladies in one end & the young men in the other. The Ladies all retired first, & I noticed when I was undressing with several others they kept a mighty twittering among themselves but as I was a little Hoxz as the Indians say (which means tite) I paid no attention to them but in the morning I got up very soon with the intention of coming to Jackson & happened to look at the partition & found it only to be Kentucky Bagging used to Bale up Cotton just about as thick as the old Drag netts we used to Haul for mullets in the Still Point I peeped through and Holy Mother of Moses A sight smit my eyes I never Saw before about two doz of prettyiest Girls you ever Saw were all Locked in the arms of Morpheus Snoring away as though they were on the Bridal Couch at the St Nicholas Hotel New York! I cleared My throat pretty Loud which awoke some of them up & Soon they were all awake & such covering up faces you never Saw I could hold in no longer I Laughed out one of the Loudest Kind of Yaw Yaws which awoke all the young men & they all went to see the Lovely Sight Some with their pants off & Some were with their Shirts off I don't think I ever had more fun in My life. I didn't Leave until ten oclock & then you better believe I came to town in quadruple time.

Well Bill I am pretty much out Henry can tell you the News as He is going to Carolina from New York Suppose you come out with him I would like very much to See your Phiz as Cas Oden used Say How does Hitton [or Hilton] get along & Roebuck is he practicing Medicine yet & Tomkins what has become of his paper I hear nothing from it tell him it wont pay to work on them old sand hills tell him to pull up Stakes & come out & make Cotton the Planters here average 10 bags to the hand after making enough corn to Support themselves which is worth 35 to 50 $ per bag! Bill you better come out here & look you out a nice rich wife I am Sitting up to one Gal whose Mamma makes enough cotton to make a fort around the big Savannah the old Mans field & Jake Pauls House & all you oughten to See her she is some [?] on a Bear fight & no mistake I courted one Gal Since I have been here & she said she rather be excused & I like a fool excused her but have learnt a lesson from her Sure and no mistake I told her I was only fooling with her no how I didn't want her she said the grapes were Sour I told her she was just as much mistaken as if she had burnt her shirt I spoke unthoughtedly you Know by thunder she gave me particular H-ll but we have made it up since & are now as thick as ever she was not much afflicted with the piles & I didn't care what I Said to her & in fact I dont care what I say to none of them I treat them politely of course?

Well Bill you must answer this very Soon & tell me all the News this Leaves us all well

My Respcts to Mr & Mrs Bonner & Charles & all inquiring friends

As Ever Your Friend

T. P. Windley

Excuse haste and a bad pen
As the pig said when he left the Sty

NOTES ON "A TARHEEL AT A MISSISSIPPI HOUSE PARTY"

By Arthur Palmer Hudson

The letter from a North Carolinian, T. P. Windley, to his friend in Bath, North Carolina, is such a delightful commentary upon doings in the deep South during the 1850's that I wish to add a few notes elucidating some of the allusions. T. P. Windley was evidently a keen observer and had a vivacious, though rather careless, style (he was writing to a friend, of course, and could dispense with punctuation, capitalization, and a few other niceties of epistolary form); so his letter comes out of the milieu of a hundred years ago, and some of the things he mentions are no longer as familar to us as they were to his friend Bill.

"'Lasses Dragging": Not included in Matthews' Dictionary of Americanisms, Craigie and Hulbert's Dictionary of American English, Bartlett's Dictionary of Americanisms, N. E. Eliason's Tarheel Speech, or any of the dictionaries of slang.

A student at the University of North Carolina, Miss Nola Jean Hatten, of Pascagoula, Mississippi, explains that in southern Mississippi, where she has attended "'lasses draggings," the term means an informal party, usually of young folk a get-together, at a mill where Louisiana (blue ribbon) sugar cane is being ground into juice and the juice evaporated into syrup. The young people drink the cane juice, sing, dance, and otherwise make merry. In my boyhood in central Mississippi, I often attended such parties on my father's and other farms, though I do not recall ever having heard them referred to as "'lasses draggings.'" I do recall that sometimes liveliness was added to the occasion if the cane juice had been allowed to ferment into "cane beer," something like cider. And hogs, fed on the fermented "skimmings," showed all the common antic effects of mild intoxication. Perhaps the term "dragging" originated from the process of evaporating the cane juice. The juice is poured into a shallow evaporator resting over a furnace. The evaporator, or pan, is divided into some twelve or fifteen sections, connecting with each other in openings at alternate ends. The juice is started in the section at the furnace-door end and is gradually pushed or dragged by strainer-like paddles and skimmers around through the sections up to the smokestack end, where, when it is cooked to the proper consistency or density, the molasses is drawn off. Thus, the festival "'lasses dragging" may get its operative word from the work of making sugar-cane syrup.

"Old Joe Sweeney": At first I identified "old Joe Sweeney" with General J. E. B. Stuart's banjoist minstrel of that name, who accompanied Jeb on all his campaigns, sometimes twanging the boys into battle, sometimes playing for square dances in the Virginia countryside, when the cavalrymen would knock off from fighting long enough to visit a mansion, such as Milton describes,

> Where perhaps some beauty lies,
> The cynosure of neighbouring eyes --

or perhaps a dozen -- and the boys would enjoy an impromptu dance.

But, unfortunately for romantic note-making, the Joe Sweeney of our Tarheel's letter was not Jeb's Joe, though he is almost as interesting. According to Carl Wittke's Tambo and Bones (Durham, N. C.: Duke University

Press, 1930): "Joe Sweeney, whose real name was Joel Walker Sweeney (1813-1860), was one of the earliest banjo performers, and before the middle of the last century, he was traveling through the South, with his two brothers, as minstrel performers. Later on, he played with various circuses" (pp. 217-218). This must have been our Tarheel's Joe, and his reference dates the letter some time before 1860, when Joel Walker Sweeney died.

"Kunkle's Minstrels": According to Dr. Wittke, cited above, Kunkel's Nightingales played in Cincinnati and Columbus, Ohio, in 1853. From the Tarheel's allusion, there is little doubt that Kunkel's Nightingales toured the South, as did most minstrel companies, following the steamboat routes along the Ohio and the Mississippi and their tributaries. With our Tarheel's praise of Kunkel's troupe the newspapers of the time, quoted by Dr. Wittke, agreed.

"Saddle Bag House": This type of domestic architecture, common in the deep South, got its name from a feature sometimes called "the dog trot" (from the fact that the pack of hounds usually found on Southern farms and plantations ran through this unscreened hallway at all hours of the day and the night). The home of one of my maternal great-grandfathers, Hastings de Journet Palmer, built in Attala County, Mississippi, in the 1840's, and still standing, was constructed on this plan, out of whipsawed heart-pine timbers mortised at the corners and pegged, weatherboarded on the outside and plastered on the inside, and covered with hand-riven cypress shingles. This house is about sixty-five miles north of Jackson, where T. P. Windley attended the house party. (See my Humor of the Old Deep South, New York, 1936, pp. 60-61.)

"Little Pigee and Picayune Butler": Of the two "comic songs" which Windley writes that he sang at the wedding party, the first was probably one of that title with seven stanzas, beginning "Old Mr. Brown he had a pig" (in other versions, "There was an old woman and she had a little pig"), and cited in Arthur Kyle Davis's Folk-Songs of Virginia, A Descriptive Index and Classification (Durham: Duke University Press, 1949), pp. 192-193. It is not in The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore. The second song has an interesting history, related by Dr. Wittke (op. cit., pp. 17-18) in connection with his account of George Nichols, a clown for Purdy Brown's Theatre and Circus of the South and West. "It has been claimed that Nichols sang 'Jim Crow,' the song that 'Daddy' Rice made famous, years before Rice made his debut on the minstrel stage. Nichols had played clown parts, and is said to have sung the song first in white face, then in Negro make-up. The idea he got from a French darky banjo player, known throughout the Mississippi Valley as Picayune Butler, a peripatetic performer who passed the hat and sang 'Picayune Butler Is Going Away.'" Years later, when Windley read about the notorious General Ben Butler, military commandant of Union occupation forces in New Orleans during the Civil War -- "Beast" Butler as he was otherwise called -- our Tarheel must have chuckled to note that the detested Yankee was called Picayune Butler, after the old song -- and a very appropriate epithet.

"To have [or not have] the Piles": In the context of our Tarheel's account of his amorous adventures, the phrase must refer to the sexual proclivities or responsiveness of the girls of whom he writes. I have not been able to find it in any dictionary of Americanisms or of slang, not even in Lester V. Berrey and Melvin Van den Brok's The American Thesaurus of Slang (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1942), which is unusually full and explicit on the subject of sexual slang.

"As the pig said when he left the sty": This type of humorous or comic expression is an example of a Wellerism, so called from the fondness of Samuel Weller, in Dickens's Pickwick Papers (1836) for it. But it is much older than Dickens, it being clearly recognized in Italian literature in the seventeenth century;* and it is still popular, as in the familiar "Every man to his taste," said the farmer as he kissed the cow."

T. P. Windley should have lived into the 1950's. He would have made a good member of the North Carolina Folklore Society. For his unwitting but far from witless contribution to this number of North Carolina Folklore, he is posthumously awarded an honorary membership in the North Carolina Society.

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* See Charles Speroni, The Italian Wellerism to the End of the Seventeenth Century, Folklore Studies: I (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1953).

THE WIDOW PEEBLES IS WILLIN'

[The following letter is published by courtesy of The Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina. It is conjecturally dated 1864. The envelope containing it bears this address and a notation:

Richmond Va paid 10
2 regemet N. C.
in care of the captain to
Daniel Turner

Summerfield N C
Sept 19th [1864]
[on end of envelope, perpendicular to the address]

19th September

Deare sir iseate my self to rite you sir that
i am well and truly hope when these few lines
cums to hand they may find you well and
doing well and go throu the war and cum hom
e safe to my hand safe and then you will
be mine if you are wilin inever wanted to
see anybody as bad as idoyou ihad rather
sea you than to eate when i am hungry idont
no whether you ever think of ne ornot when
i am asleape iam dreaming about you whe i
am a wake i sea no peas the world is wide
the sea is deape in your arms i long
to sleape the rose is red the vilent is blue
shugar is swete but not like you iwant
you to send me your liknes so ican hav it
ot sea if icant sea you this from the
widow Peebles to

Daniel turner
fail not to rite to me
when this you sea remember me
tho fare a part we be

A BROACH OF THREAD

By Louise Pender

[This original ballad was composed by Miss Pender while she was a student in English 167 (The Ballad) during the 1956 summer session of the University of North Carolina. Miss Pender gives the following account of herself and of the ballad.]

I was born in Hertford County in 1916 and lived there until 1927, when my family moved to Burlington, N. C., where we live now.

After graduation from Burlington High School in 1933, I worked in a hosiery mill for two years. Upon being asked by a teacher, who had been employed to work with the young people in our church, why I was not in college, I had no answer, since I had given no thought to pursuing a higher education. The question caused me to think seriously, however, and I investigated the possibility of going to school. It was during the depression--or rather immediately afterward--and I needed financial help. Campbell College offered that help, and I made plans to enter the fall term of 1935-36 within two days prior to school's opening. I had to borrow a trunk and draw from the Christmas Savings bank my small amount of money. It was raining the day I arrived, and I would gladly have returned home with my father. Fortunately, I did not succumb to my weakness, and two years later I received the Associate in Arts diploma.

I entered Elon College in the fall of 1937, where I stayed for one semester. Owing to the fact that money was a problem again--rather, the lack of it--I dropped out of school to work again in the hosiery mill. By the fall of 1938, I had saved enough money to return to Elon, where I remained for the year and the summer term. I completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree, but did not receive my diploma until the spring of 1940.

In the meantime, I entered The Carver School of Missions and Social Work, Louisville, Kentucky for graduate study, and I was graduated from this institution in May 1941 with the Master of Religious Education degree.

My first position upon graduation was in Washington, D.C., where I worked in a Children's Home for two years as a counselor. I was asked to return to Campbell College after this experience to teach eighth grade, supervise a dormitory with 30 girls, and to teach physical education for the college girls. This job lasted one year, and I thought my teaching experience had come to an end. The enormous responsibility of all these things made me feel that I had better try to do something else. So I took a position as Youth Director in a Baptist Church for two years. Following this, I went to Oxford Orphanage and worked as counselor for 30 boys, supervised the girls' athletic program, and taught school for seven years. These activities were not simultaneous, however. I enjoyed the teaching very much. Feeling the need to change from the sheltered environment, I took a position with the Durham County Welfare Department, where I worked for nine months. Then, with the fall coming, the call of the classroom was again challenging to me, and I was successful in getting a teaching position in Angier High School in Harnett County. I have been here for three years, and my plans are to return there for the next year. I teach English and serve as guidance worker.

The following story appeared in the Raleigh News and Observer June 10, 1956, under the name of Manly Wade Wellman. The incident happened in rural Lenoir County some hundred and six years ago.

This befell the Tilghmans of that region, and indeed might come under the heading of family business and therefore private, had it not seriously occupied the attention of a grand jury at the County Seat, a Superior court in Craven County, and eventually the distinguished Supreme Court Justices of the State. Turn back the clock, therefore, to July of 1850, and see what manner of men, women, and children the Tilghmans were at that time and place.

A quarrelsome set, evidently. Two little girls, cousins, were disputing over nothing more importantthan a spool of cotton thread--a "broach," it was called in 1850. Such a spool comes at a dime today, and may have cost a penny so long ago. But the children argued loudly and angrily, and the adults got into the controversy, notably Joseph L. Tilghman, a prosperous and hot-tempered blacksmith, who also owned a farm and slaves, and his nephew John, son of Joseph's brother Wilson. Others of the family connection listened, with interest that grew serious as John and his Uncle Joseph grew hotter and hotter under their homesewn collars.

"I'll kill you," announced Uncle Joseph at last, and he was the sort of man who was apt to do that, or anything else he said. But John Tilghman, a big youngster, was of the same blood and the same temperament.

"Don't do it sneakingly," he rejoined. "Take your double-barrel gun and I'll take my rifle, and we'll have a fair fight."

"I'm not ready now," Joseph told him. Then, perhaps lest he sound weak as well as unready: "I'll kill you if you don't let me alone."

John didn't want to drop it, however. "I'll tell grandfather about those notes you hold against him," he threatened. "You know you got the money for nothing from grandfather."

It is hard to establish today just what John meant, or how bad a tale he could carry to the head of the Tilghman family. Some record exists of the notes mentioned. Apparently Joseph Tilghman had bought, from a neighbor by the resounding name of John C. Washington, $500 worth of notes his father had signed. Anyway, John walked out of his uncle's house with that threat crackling in the air behind him.

On August 4, a Sunday, Joseph Tilghman's wife Susan--she seems to have been a mild woman, though married into a highly excitable family--remarked to her husband that young John was prepared to swear in court that Grandpa's notes were illegally held by Uncle Joseph.

This would suggest that Joseph Tilghman, unlike that other blacksmith immortalized by the poet Longfellow, could not say flatly that he owed not any man. However, he conformed to the Longfellow qualifications in that he looked the whole world in the face; also in that the muscles of his brawny arms were strong as iron bands.

"He will have to swear soon if he does," he commented on the report

of his nephew's intention, "for I intend to kill him before Saturday night."

Saturday night came and went without bloodshed among the Tilghmans, and was followed by Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. On Thursday, August 15, Joseph Tilghman picked up a sack of corn and strode off to feed his hogs, 400 yards from home. Later, relatives and neighbors heard the sound of a shot. And Joseph came staggering back, bleeding profusely from wounds in the head.

"I shall leave you a widow before tomorrow morning," he predicted to his wife, and collapsed. She tried to dress his wounds--a gash and a terrifying round hole. "Save me if you can," he mumbled.

A neighbor heard this, then ran to fetch Dr. Woodley from Kinston. The doctor found that Joseph Tilghman's skull was fractured, and that a bullet had pierced his forehead above the right eye. A brother arrived, Wilson Tilghman, father of John. He said that John was badly wounded and charged that his uncle had attacked him with a knife.

"Not so, Wilson," muttered Joseph. "John met me in the road and told me he had come on purpose to kill me."

So saying, he lapsed into delirium, then into a dying coma. Dr. Woodley left the house of death, and followed another messenger to the nearby home of Council Wooten.

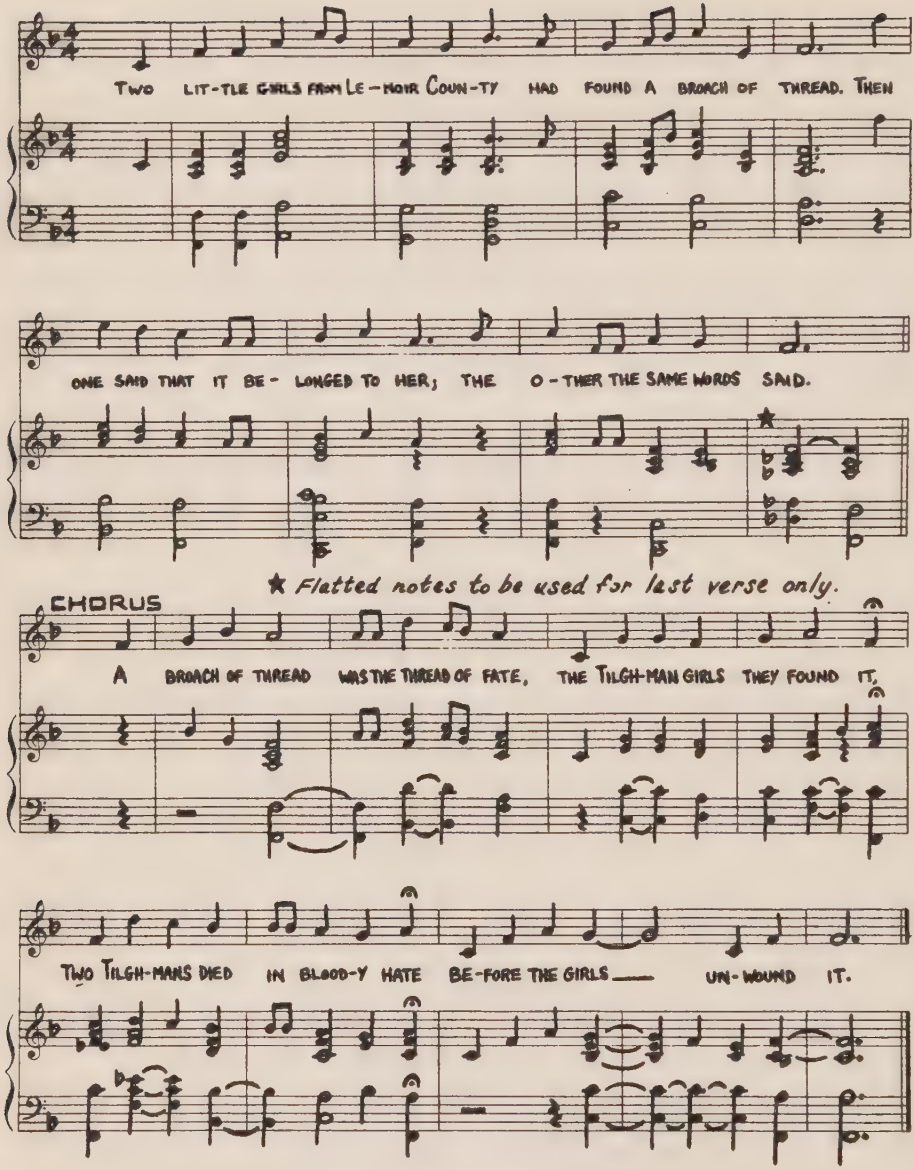
Upon the Wooten porch lay John Tilghman, his right hand stabbed through, with a severed nerve and artery. He was weak from loss of blood, but revived after the doctor dressed his hurt, and said that he had been attacked by his uncle and had defended himself by shooting him, then clubbing him with the gun barrel. But a grand jury at Kinston charged him with murder. In nearby Craven County, he went to trial before Judge John W. Wllis, who later, as governor, would assist North Carolina out of the Union into the Confederacy.

John's plea of self-defence was not believed. His Uncle Joseph, the State pointed out, knew he was dying when he said that John had been the aggressor. The jury found John guilty, and later the Supreme Court affirmed this verdict. John eventually was hanged. And which of the little girls finally established her claim to the spool of cotton thread is a mystery today.

Using the story as a basis, I have tried to compose a ballad, which I have called "A Broach of Thread," in common-measure meter. I have tried to employ some of the ballad techniques in this ballad. These are: (1) commonplaces, (2) incremental repetition, (3) questions and answers, (4) telling the story impersonally, and (5) letting the story unfold dramatically.

This is my first attempt to do creative work of this type.

I am indebted to Mr. Bill Brady, a classmate in English 167: British Ballads and American Folksongs, for arranging the music for the ballad.


TWO LIT-TLE GIRLS FROM LE-NOIR COUN-TY HAD FOUND A BROACH OF THREAD. THEN
ONE SAID THAT IT BE- LONGED TO HER; THE O-THER THE SAME WORDS SAID.
★ Flatted notes to be used for last verse only.
CHORUS
A BROACH OF THREAD WAS THE THREAD OF FATE, THE TILGH-MAN GIRLS THEY FOUND IT,
TWO TILGH-MANS DIED IN BLOOD-Y HATE BE-FORE THE GIRLS — UN-WOUND IT.

Two little girls in Lenoir County
Had found a broach of thread.
Then one said that it belonged to her;
The other the same words said.

Chorus

A broach of thread was the thread of fate;
The Tilghman girls they found it.
Two Tilghmans died in bloody hate
Before the girls unwound it.

They argued all day long one Monday,
And again the next day too.
They argued loudly and angrily,
They swore till their faces were blue.

The Tilghmans were a quarrelsome set;
They brawled at anything.
Their tempers were sharp as a razor blade,
And, man, they'd soon fight as sing.

Joe Tilghman was a mighty man,
A farmer and blacksmith strong.
He had a nephew young and quick
'Lowed no one'd do him wrong.

The Tilghmans would argue at anything,
They were a quarrelsome set.
Joe Tilghman said he'd kill Johnnie boy,
And John remembered the threat.

Johnny said in a right loud voice to Joe,
"Don't do it underhand;
Get your double-barrel gun and I'll get one;
I'm bounden to fight like a man.

"Just remember the notes you owe Grandpa,
Don't ever forget the same;
I'll tell him how you got those notes;
Who from, I'll give the name."

On August 4 Joe's good wife, Sue,
Said to Joe, her great husband,
"Young John will swear in the big courthouse
That you got them notes underhand."

"He'll have to swear soon if he hopes to live,
For by Saturday night he'll be dead."
But Saturday night rolled 'round again
And still there was no blood shed.

Now Thursday as to the hog pens he went,
A morning both bright and fair;
Joe could not rest his mind from the fear
Of John's black threat and dare.

Joe looked to the east, he looked to the west;
Not a soul at all did he see.
A shot was heard by the neighbors around,
Loud it rang in that county.

Joe staggered back across the field,
Blood rushing from wounds in the head,
Said, "You'll be a widow by tomorrow morn,
For by that time I'll be dead."

Sue tried to dress the wounds in his head,
But no luck at all had she.
"Save me, save, if you can," he said;
He wanted from death to be free.

Joe's brother came in to the house just then
Saying John was wounded too.
"Why did you jump on my boy, Joe,
When he's so much younger'n you?"

"I didn't jump on my own brother's son;
We met by the side of the road.
He 'lowed he'd come for just one thing;
And with that he emptied his load."

Joe Tilghman then passed away into death,
And the doctor left by the door.
He went to find the young boy John,
Who was lying on Wooten's floor.

"Why did you shoot your own uncle, John,
Down yonder by the tree?"
"I didn't shoot my uncle Joe
'Til he'd first jumped on me."

John was taken to the grand jury,
He was forced to take a stand;
He was taken next to the Supreme Court,
The highest court of the land.

Young John was hanged on th' high gallows tree
By his neck until he died.
None ever knew whose broach it was,
And none would tell who'd lied.

Chorus

A broach of thread was the thread of fate;
The Tilghman girls they found it.
Two Tilghmans died in bloody hate
Before the girls unwound it.

HOME REMEDIES

Collected by Flora McDonald, Moore County Home Demonstration Agent

[At the December 1955 meeting of the North Carolina Folklore Society Miss McDonald gave a delightful illustrated talk on home-made quilts in Moore County. See Miss Eleanor Driscoll's article in our July 1956 issue.]

Poke Root: Boil it and bathe in water to cure the itch.
Wild Cherry bark tea to cure sore throat.
Blackberry wine for dysentery or flux.
Sheep tea for breaking out measles and hives. (Goat balls will not do.)
Catnip tea for colic and for soothing the nerves.
Molasses and sulphur to purify the blood in spring.
Calamus root for colic and cramps.
Maypop for babies and colic -- as a sedative.
Yellow root for fever blisters - the yellow blossom kind; looks like parsnips.
Pepper grass tea for cramps.
Lion's tongue tea for rheumatism.
Purge grass as a laxative.
Soot on a cut to stop bleeding.
Sassafras root for high blood pressure.
Peach tree bark tea for children's sick stomach.
Make red pepper tea, strong (use 1/2 cup and fill up with sweet milk), for vomiting.
Wound from rusty nail: Drive nail in tree to keep out soreness.
Raw apple scraped and eaten sure cure for dysentery.
Beat up fire coals in water - drink infusion for dysentery.
China berry balls eaten for fits.
For wound from nail in foot, burn wool and let it smoke into the wound.
Teaspoon sugar and drop of kerosene or turpentine for cough.
Onion and sugar chopped together as a syrup for cough.
Mustard leaves scalded for plaster to prevent pneumonia.
Burnt alum to be used as white powder to mop out baby's mouth for thrash.
Cinders in whiskey for cough.
Blood purifier: Wild cherry tree bark boiled in water to thick syrup for tonic. Use 3 teaspoons a day.
Cough syrup: Honey, vinegar, and batter mixed.
Lump of lard the size of walnut
1 teaspoon camphor
1 teaspoon turpentine
1 teaspoon kerosene - mixed and heated on flannel for croup
White peeling of eggshell will draw rising boil to a head.
Garlic beaten up for rising boil and for pneumonia - White potato the same.
Fat meat will bring rising to head.
Ear-ache: Coal of fire put in a cup and covered with sugar. Put a funnel over the cup and let the smoke go in the ear. Be sure that the sugar doesn't catch fire.
Whooping cough: Broom sage roots, honey, alum, and onion.
Cramp: Pan of water under the bed at night.
Headache: Put feet in bucket of hot water.
Cough syrup: Cherry bark, alum, and honey.
Alder tag tea in the spring for a tonic. Sweeten to taste.
Tar water for Spring tonic.
Chew inside bark of a blackjack tree for diarrhea.

Bleed for strong blood in the spring. A vein was cut in the elbow. The knives were put together like our measuring spoons: the big knife for the horses, and the little ones for people.

Fodder tea for measles.

St. John's plant for fever.

Sumac tea made from the red velvety berries with sugar added, for cough.

Jersusalem oak seed made into candy like syrup for worms.

Queen's Delight tea made from roots with whiskey for neuralgia (sun pain).

All bitter medicine is a tonic.

Prickly-sage root tea and whiskey three times a day for rheumatism.

White ash root tea with whiskey good for rheumatism.

Grandma's Salve for boils and sores or other skin ailments, made as follows:

Two roasted eggs (eggs rolled in wet cloths and cooked in ashes). After done use only yolks of eggs.

Take a piece of beeswax the size of the egg yellows; sweet gum or still resin the same size; piece of mutton tallow (fresh suet) the same size.

Put all in a frying pan on a slow fire. Mash eggs with fork and stir until all is heated through. Strain through a cloth into little jars.

HOW OCRACOKE GOT ITS NAME

By Elizabeth Scott (Mrs. Sam A.) Cooper

[Born in Atlanta, Georgia, the daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Scott, of Raleigh and Atlanta, and a granddaughter of the founder of Agnes Scott College, Mrs. Cooper was educated in the Raleigh Public Schools, at Flora Macdonald College, and at Elon College, taking her B.A. from Elon (as did four other members of her family). She is the wife of Mr. Sam A. Cooper, teacher of agriculture in the Alamance County Schools for the past twenty-five years, and is a primary teacher herself, at Saxapahaw. The Coopers live in the old home place of her husband's family. Mrs. Cooper says that she has been writing since her girlhood, and has published in the Raleigh Times and in school and college periodicals.

[Her account of the origin of the name Ocracoke (technically, a place legend) was based on traditions she heard during long sojourns on the island. It agrees with the one in the North Carolina Writer's Program How They Began (New York: Harian Publications, 1941), which glosses "Ocracoke" as follows:

["Hyde Co.; sett. in 17th century; according to a legend, in 1718, the pirate Blackbeard, pursued by Lt. Robert Maynard of the Royal Navy, and becalmed, believing that the wind would rise if the cock crew, shook his fist and shouted: 'Oh, crow, cock!' However, a map of 1676 shows an Okok, and a map of 1709 indicates the place as Occacock."

[But the folk do not get their history or their etymology from books and maps. Neither did Mrs. Cooper. And the folklorist is just as much interested in legend and folk etymology as in history and scientific etymology.

[Mrs. Cooper composed the ballad to meet one of the requirements of English 167 (British and American Folksongs), taken during the 1956 summer session at the University of North Carolina.]

Springtime has come to the Island.
It's as green as it can be,
But the voice of the ocean is quiet
In "The Graveyard of the Sea."

An almost uncanny stillness
Has settled upon the deep,
And a pall of grey mist is hovering
Where the ghost boats lie asleep.

The oldtimers called it "the graveyard,"
And ye sailors of ships, beware!
The shallow shoals have filled their holds
With those who have foundered there!

These mortuaries are undisturbed
By any human claims,
But the mermaids play as mermaids may,
And they know them all by names.

They often bedeck their tresses
With gold from the days of yore,
And they live in an ancient galleon
That lies on the ocean's floor.

Blackbeard, the chief of robbers,
As wicked as pirates go,
Has brought his crew of black devils
To the waters of Pamlico.

This ruthless band of cut-throats,
Killers by night and day,
Followed the course of the sailing ships
As a carrion follows its prey.

They fought, they slashed, and murdered,
They wallowed in blood and gore!
They took the loot they had captured
And buried it on the shore.

Here on this peaceful island,
Green with the live-oak trees,
Where the spicy smell of the myrtle
Is carried upon the breeze;

Into this lovely Eden, where
The sea-oats grow in the sands,
They dug a hole for their treasures
With the dried blood still on their hands.

It happened according to legend
That Blackbeard had had a sea fight,
And because of the perilous shallows
He dared not come inland at night.

He dropped his anchor off the Island,
And he knew his pursuer was near.
He cursed his trembling henchmen
And he pleaded with Chanticleer:

"O crow, cock!" he called in the darkness,
And a gale with fiendish glee
Picked up the weird sea chanty
And hurled it into the sea.

"O crow, cock," said the ripples.
"O crow, cock," said the waves.
The same cried the corpses of the sailors
As they turned in their watery graves.

The moon was shrouded securely
With a coverlet over her head,
While Orion with belt and broad sword
Had long ago gone to bed.

The night was black and evil,
And out of the shadows weird
A huge black form like a phantom ship
Slid along the side of Blackbeard.

There followed a gory sea battle,
Without honor or code or creed;
The only rules that they followed
Were the love of gold and greed.

With one mighty stroke of the cutlass
They cut off Blackbeard's head,
And seizing this coveted trophy
Away in the darkness they fled.

But the body of Pirate Blackbeard
Managed to keep afloat,
And with no eyes for a compass to guide him,
Swam seven times aroung his boat.

And there in the cold grey morning
Death for Blackbeard came;
He sank in the channel waters
And was never seen again.

Back on the lonely seashore
Brave men had heard the call.
"O crow, cock" had a meaning,
And it has pleased them all.

"This is the name we shall call it;
'O crow, cock' it shall be."
But time and usage have changed it
To Ocracoke in the sea.

And still the ocean is restless,
And the tides run wide and high,
While the wild waves reach far up the beach
In the place where the ghost ships lie.

A NORTH CAROLINA VERSE EPISTLE OF THE 1850's

By James McCanless

[The following is a copy of a rimed letter written by James McCanless, a prominent farmer of Watauga County, North Carolina, to his brother, David McCanless, who was at the time Clerk of the Court in Yancey County. It was copied from the original manuscript in 1947 by Mr. Albert S. McLean, of Asheville, North Carolina.

[Mr. McLean, a postal employee in Asheville, is of Scottish descent and has interested himself in the Scots of North Carolina, in the pioneer days of North Carolina, and in other topics of historical interest. Last August at Brevard, he presented an extremely interesting paper on the adventures of two young North Carolinians in the Revolutionary War. He is at present assisting the Editor in applying a questionnaire prepared by The Scottish Survey of Edinburgh University to North Carolinians of Scottish descent, for the purpose of determining what, if any, vestiges of Scottish speech and culture persist in North Carolina.

[It will be noticed that the McCanless letter uses a score or more of Scotticisms: "cram your creel" (i.e., stomach or "bread basket"), "wains" for weans, children), "gear" (for possessions, goods), "deel may care" (for deil -- i.e., devil), "deel a bit" (for deil a bit), "canny care" (prudent, thrifty), "geb . . . an han" (perhaps tongue or mouth and hand), etc. Also unmistakable is the influence of the poems of Robert Burns, which have been popular in North Carolina for a hundred and fifty years. (It is said that a relative of another Scots poet, James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, a friend of Burns, settled in Hillsboro, North Carolina. The editor would be interested in information about him).]

Dear Friend the Clerk my favorite brother
We used to dote upon each other
I'll ner forget you while I am breathing
But you behave like any heathen

Since you sat scribling for the Court
You've lost your taste for friends or sport
Does no kind thoughts run in your head
But cram your Creel and go to bed

These twenty years I've been your debtor
For your blunt hindmost careless letter
A poor wee thing wrote in December
As long ago as I remember

I paid you visits two you know
Some ten or fifteen years ago
And Peet a guest that I did bring
Would grace a visit to a king

Here I'll suspend deserved abuses
And listen for your lame excuses
Perhaps your pleas may be so strong
T'will prove your Lordship not far rong

I hope you'e well my brother Dave
Nancy and all the wains ye have
I would like to know how you are doing
And what so closely your persuing

The passing strangers often tell
Your all in health and doing well
But I wish to greet you great and small
And Nancy first among you all

O Nancy queen of woman kind
Far hast thou left thy sex behind
And Dave you'll ner get such another
She served as farmer kook and Mother

In past days of your wild oats age
When trips was cheap to go by stage
But these old tales we'll here Excuse
And lay them up for primer times

My blessing on your modest face
Loth would I be to fend your grace
But to knit at things we've heard and seen
Should be no honour among the kin

Now brother dear you please me well
Your reaped from Bacchus cursed spell
I am told youv quit the staggering clan
And at the Court become a man

Ye please the people as a clerk
Your stumpy quill makes no rong mark
And faith I'm right well pleased to hear
Your gathering fast in worldy gear

I'll now wind up my jeers and jolts
And tell you something of our folks
Their health at presents very good
No sickness in the neighborhood

Some time ago the mumps was here
And stormly threatened family gear
Some dit its veto just escape
But sadly twisted out of shape

And now dear brother I will venture
To tell you how we passed the winter
We spent it mostly in the house
And feeding horses hogs and cows

When November's hoary wing was spread
The golden days of autumn fled
All nature frowned in Chilling form
The clouds was foul with winter storm

Then blinding snow in torrents fell
The frozen earth received it well
The lowing herds and squealing race
Each in his language wailed his case

Each member of the feathered throng
Who greet the spring with merry song
Now silent sits in shivering form
To bide the savage winter storm

The streams forbore their ripling sound
In icy fetters safely bound
In fields and flood and man and beast
The peels of nature almost sceased

When Boreas gave his bellows blast
Our snow clad fields in heaps were cast
Herled stacks and fences and poor cows
And kicked the roof from many a house

Then winter's noisy car drove past
And strewed the yearling hides broad cast
Left fowls without their feet and legs
Which makes us scrimp and scarce of eggs

Of times I'll say hit just a word
Dear knows their scanty scrimp and hard
We'v been growing worse from year to year
Till moneys missed the market clear

The Legislature done no good
They would tax potatoes if they could
The Revenue Law for to increase
For from that bon they draw their fees

Much time and talk you know was spent
On Railroads and the President
We lost them both and deel may care
We had both time and talk to spare

If I had time I could relate
Much of our country church and state
Knownothings and their views express
And point out those who know much less

Perhaps the news has reached your court
Our last year crops was thin and short
And surely will take canny care
To make it reach the crop this year

Thus cares without and fears within
Makes human life a checkered scene
On fancy's pinions bound in haste
Ere We'r aware our days is passed

Now three sevre winters I have seen
And saw the fields as often green
Still entertained by prospects flowers
And heedless passed youths golden hours

Times wheels don't wait for wind or tide
On which I've had a pleasant ride
And deel a bit would I complain
To take the same trip over again

Now dont let wealth constrain your step
Nor small misfortune twist your lip
A gentle race will win your share
And all beyond is idle care

So now geer up and come and see us
I long to see your practised arm
Draw skillful sweeps across the thorm

Yer famous as a music man
Both with your geb and with your han
And sweetly does the Conger sing
When ye lay the stick out over the string

It gives to youth such monkey pranks
And vigor lends wornout shanks
Turns frowning wrath to pleasant smile
And sorrow into joy a while

Some long faced lads with groans complain
That violins are all profain
Now scanty views I think they've taken
Their deepest stordy's been fat bacon

Now should you run for Clerk again
I hope you'd never run in vain
But show the boys you are no gump
Nor no sheep shank upon a stump

And if your beat don't weep and wail
And hang your ears and tuck your tail
But calmly to your fortune bow
And like Cincinatus take your plow

May powers above preserve your health
Increase your comforts and your wealth
To hoary age your sight not fail
Nor stomach for your beef and cale

May your sons of wisdom have their share
Your daughters virtuous and fair
And blessings till yo. need no more
May fill your basket and your store

Now present with you I have felt
And much too long on this Ive dwelt
I've been your friend and still remain
Your ever loving Brother James

With the greatest Respect your ever loving brother and sister

[Signed] James and Salina McCanless

AN ELEGY OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

By Grace Greenlee Bowman

[The following little elegy was contributed to North Carolina Folklore by Mr. Albert S. McLean, concerning whom see the headnote to "A North Carolina Verse Epistle of the 1850's." Mr. McLean gives the following information about it.

["Captain John Bowman, of Burke County, North Carolina, was killed in the battle of Ramseur's Mill, in Lincoln County, N.C. Prior to his death, he had been a successful and prominent merchant, and at the time of his death he was sheriff of Burke County.

["The elegy was found among the Burke records now in the Department of Archives and History in Raleigh, among some papers entitled "Bonds belonging to the estate of ----------, sold July 16, 1781." (The blank was to be filled by the name 'John Bowman Esqr.') One of the pages in a ledger included in the papers contained the following poem, thought to have been written by his widow, Grace (Greenlee) Bowman. 'Polly,' referred to in the admonition at the end, was Mary (Polly) Bowman, a daughter of Captain John Bowman and Grace (Greenlee) Bowman, who married William Allison Tate."]

Like the Sun Rising in the Morn
He went away left me forlorn
and saw the tears I shed
My boding heart did then foretell
That fatal Evening heard the knell
that my dear John had Bled
Tears that must ever fall
For Ah no lights the past Recall
No cries awoke the dead

****

Weep not Polly for I will be
a mother and father unto thee oh

TARHEEL PLACE NAMES

By Herbert Shellans

[A graduate of Brooklyn College (B.A., 1954), Mr. Shellans, after his discharge from the Army (1954-56), came South to study anthropology and folklore. While he was in the Army, he sang for his comrades and appeared on ballad and folksong programs over WFIL-TV (Philadelphia). Since coming to North Carolina last summer, he has appeared on several public programs, has been collecting folksongs with a tape-recorder in the Blue Ridge Mountains, has been appointed a graduate assistant to the Editor, and has been made Chairman of Folk Music, Junior Division, of the North Carolina Federation of Music Clubs. He and his wife, Harriet, who is also a musician (much better educated in that art, he says, than he is), are living in Chapel Hill, and Mrs. Shellans commutes on schooldays to teach music in the Mebane School. The Editor is indebted to both for helping with the music of North Carolina Folklore.]

Local legends and place-names constitute a part of what is called popular history. Although they usually contain more fancy that fact, they possess a charm that seems to appeal to all.

The following article is a sampling of what North Carolina has to offer in the way of local lore and legend.

Barbecue.

Following Highway no. 27 out of Lillington in Harnett County, one soon comes to old Barbecue Church (1757). The church acquired its name from nearby Barbecue Creek.

Mr. Leon McDonald of Olivia informed me that he grew up with the tradition that Cornwallis' troops barbecued an ox on that stream enroute from their costly victory at Guilford Court House to Wilmington. He also mentioned that he has since seen the wafer-sealed royal grant, dated 1769, which conveyed 75 acres (on one of which the church stands) and called for boundaries on Barbacue Creek.

Another account is advanced by the Cape Fear historian, Malcolm Fowler of Lillington. Neill MacNeill, Scottish sailor of the 1740's, on a trip inland saw the early morning mist rising from the spring-fed creek and was reminded of steam rising from the barbecue sands of India. He remarked, "It looks like Barbecue."

Barbecue High School had purchased an expensive stage curtain elaborately monogrammed "BHS." But soon hot-dog and barbecue stands began to spring up on the new highways. So, to avoid association with these aromatic establishments and save the monogrammed curtain, Barbecue High School became Benhaven High School.

Bat Cave.

Bat Cave, a small rural community in Henderson County, is some fifteen miles from Hendersonville, and is situated on both sides of Broad River. According to Mrs. Sadie S. Patton, its name comes from a large, dark cavern on the mountainside which is, or once was, infested with large

colonies of bats. Fairly recent explorations have, however, disproved this theory. Visitors who have penetrated the interior of the cave, describe it as a dark, wet opening in the mountain, with little, if any, sign of bats.

It is believed that during the Civil War, this community, as well as other places in the Rocky Broad Gorge, served as a hiding place for outliers, renegades, and bushwhackers. Some believe that there was an "underground railroad" through this section, where runaway Negroes were assisted in their escape to points farther south, but no conclusive evidence has been found to substantiate this rumor. These popular beliefs have been the foundation for many old tales about Bat Cave and adjoining regions.

Old Trap.

Old Trap, a town in the southern portion of Camden County, is one of our State's earliest communities. It is bounded principally by the Pasquotank River, and to a lesser degree by the Albemarle Sound.

The following approximate chronological listing of the town's names was given me by Mr. J. F. Pugh, a resident of Old Trap.

1660-1695 ..... Akehurst Ridge
1695-1725 ..... Raymond's Neck (name survives in Raymond's Creek)
1725-1770 ..... Down River
1770-1880 ..... The Trap
1880-1956 ..... Old Trap

In early days the principal exports of the settlers in this region were forest products, pork, and tobacco. They imported manufactured products from various places, and received sugar, rum, and molasses from the West Indies. The farmers took their grains for processing to a windmill on a small bluff along the river. Where the roads from the windmill and the bay (where most of the imports were unloaded) intersect, there stood a grogshop or tavern. On their way to the mill the farmers would often stop for a toddy or dram, and they tarried. It is no wonder, then, that the womenfolk began to call the location "the trap." Later, when the dispensary was no longer in operation, the place became known as "the old trap."

Spill Corn.

The oldest residents of the Spill Corn area in Madison County do not remember a time when the community and creek were known by any name other than Spill Corn.

School Superintendant William W. Peek informed me that a ford through the creek existed near the old school building, and that this ford had very steep banks on both sides of the creek. According to legend, the early settlers used this ford in carrying corn (on horseback) to the mill, and the steep banks of the ford sometimes caused the sacks of corn to spill off the horse's back.

And Spill Corn got its name.

Topsail.

There is an island just off the Atlantic Coast and Pender County. Sometime around 1700, when sail-boats still constituted the major means of water travel, look-outs were stationed on this island to watch for incoming ships (legend says pirate ships). The first part of the ship to show on the horizon

was the top-mast or top-sail (pronounced topsul, with the accent on the first syllable). The look-out would give the cry "topsail!"

The island was named Topsail Island. The adjoining part of the mainland plus the island became known as Topsail Township.

Mr. William T. Batchelor, Principal of Topsail High School, is my major informant.

Comfort.

Comfort, an unincorporated village in Jones County, has about 300 residents. Although I have been unable to trace the origin of its name, I offer an anecdote related to me by Mr. John D. Larkins, Jr., of Trenton.

This area was a crossroads during the operation of the Goldsboro Lumber Company, which ran a railroad through the upper section of the County. This railroad no longer exists. When the proposal was made in recent years to pave the road through the village, the road had already fallen into such a state of disrepair that the townsfolk whimsically referred to the village as Misery instead of Comfort.

Snakebite.

When I first encountered the name Snakebite Township I quickly, but mistakenly, assumed that the name had come about because someone there was once bitten by a snake. The story told, however, is certainly worthy of front page-headlines. They would read, "Man Bites Snake!"

I am especially indebted to Mr. Roy Parker, Jr., of Windsor, N. C., for my material concerning Snakebite Township. I refer particularly to his article "Snakebite Gets Named" which appeared in the November 1, 1956, issue of the newspaper Bertie Ledger-Advance.

Snakebite Township is situated along the Windsor-Lewiston highway in Bertie County.

Mr. Jim Speight, a native of Snakebite Township, relates the following tale of how the area acquired its interesting and unusual name.

During the old days preceding the Civil War, the men of the various townships assembled for their annual militia drill. Such occasions were called "muster days." This was a happy and spirited event for the many lonely men from quiet and secluded farms. So spirited, in fact, that the old militia court-martial records contain numerous cases of these citizen-soldiers being prosecuted for their overzealous and riotous actions. It was upon just such a day that Snakebite was named.

During the course of one of these festive gatherings the supply of whiskey became exhausted. All were dismayed, but one soldier much more than the others. His desire for more whiskey was so strong that he finally vowed to "bite the head off a snake" if he could get just another drop more.

This prospect was far too delightful for his fun-seeking companions to ignore. They quickly took up a collection and purchased the whiskey. Then, in even quicker fashion, they fetched a snake from nearby Cashie Swamp.

Our thirsty man-at-arms abided by his oath .... He bit the head off the snake.

Maggie.

I am grateful to Mr. H. C. Wilburn, who was kind enough to send me an informative newspaper clipping. This article, by Mrs. C. L. Bradley for the Waynesville Mountaineer, has been my chief source of information concerning the town of Maggie.

The first Post Office at Maggie (Haywood County) was established in 1903 by "Uncle Jack" Setzer, who just recently celebrated his 89th birthday. The Post Office was built into one room of his home, and it was named after one of his daughters, who is now Maggie Setzer Plyant.

The town has a new Post Office now, but the original one is on display at the Maggie Country Store. This store is a colorful establishment, and might strike one as belonging more to a bygone era than to our present age. Still found here are articles such as red suspenders, sunbonnets, the proverbial cracker barrel near the pot-bellied stove, the hams and slabs of salt pork hanging nearby, the coffee grinder, rock candy, and sassafras.

Sometime near the establishment of the first Maggie Post Office there seems to have been a sort of rash of post offices in this area of the State bearing the names of girls. Besides Maggie there were Nellie, Addie, and Beta. Some other North Carolina towns whose names seem to pay tribute to members of the fairer sex are Bertha, Florence, Lizzie, Maribel, Ruth, and Stella.

Glen Raven.

John Q. Grant established and owned the first mill at Glen Raven in Alamance County. When he was granted a freight depot, and soon after that, a post office, he had to name the community. He liked Glendale but could not use that name because another such post office existed in the State.

According to local legend, he was very fond of hunting crows, and so decided to use Glen from the first name he liked, and Raven for the second. Generations have passed, but still alive in the name Glen Raven is the tale of how much an earlier settler enjoyed shooting crows.

My thanks go to Mr. J. D. Lawrie, Principal of Glen Raven School, for supplying me with much of the foregoing material.

Happy Plains.

Taylorsville is a town in Alexander County and is situated at the base of the foot hills of the Brushy Mountains. Even though it is not in the mountains themselves, the land is very rolling, and mountains are in sight. Clear level land is not available in large tracts.

Happy Plains School is located on one of the few level spots. In this locality there is actually a plain. Before the school was located here it was an open meadow, and level enough for a large athletic field. The people gathered here for picnics, baseball, and any other activity that meant fun. In other words, they had a happy time on this spot. When it became time to name the school later built here, it seemed very natural to call it Happy Plains.

This account is as it was related by the older residents of the community to Mr. H. G. Rose, Principal of the Happy Plains School.

Toast.

Miss Margaret B. Jackson, who has lived near the town of Toast for forty years, has always heard the following story.

A government man was once sent there to investigate the establishing of a post office. This agent, however, was at a loss for a suitable name. One morning at breakfast he was wondering about an appropriate name while nibbling his toast. "Toast!" he exclaimed; "toast, that would be a good name for this new post office." And so it came to be.

It would be difficult to verify this story, but as my informant stated, "I guess it's no more improbable than many other government doings."

Our Tarheel towns and their names offer living proof for the statement once made by Francis Bacon:

> "Name, though it seem but a superficial and outward matter, yet it carrieth much impression and enchantment."